

Study: Light alcohol consumption linked to cancer

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Bad news for folks looking to continue indulging this holiday season.

A recent Japanese study found that light to moderate [drinking](#) increases

the risk of cancer.

Cancer, the peer-reviewed journal of the American Cancer Society, published the findings. Masayoshi Zaitso, Ph.D., led the study. It analyzed information from 33 general hospitals throughout Japan from 2005-2016. Zaitso and his colleagues reviewed clinical data from 63,200 people who had cancer and 63,200 people who did not have cancer. The latter group was controlled for such factors as age, sex, the date they were admitted to the hospital and the hospital to which they were admitted. All patients reported their average standardized amounts of daily alcohol consumption. That included 6 ounces of Japanese sake and an equal amount of wine, 17 ounces of beer and 2 ounces of whiskey.

With zero alcohol consumption, the overall cancer risk appeared to be lower. Light drinking—drinking once per day for 10 years or having two drinks each day for five years—increased the overall risk for cancer by 5%. No matter the duration of alcohol consumption, people who drank two or fewer drinks each day also had an increased risk of cancer.

The same patterns were mostly seen when factoring for age, occupational class, and smoking or drinking. Elevated risks for colon, stomach, breast, prostate, colorectal and esophageal cancers were found.

"In Japan, the primary cause of death is cancer," Zaitso said. "Given the current burden of overall cancer incidence, we should further encourage promoting public education about alcohol-related [cancer](#) risk."

The study's findings, which specifically focused on the Japanese population, comes more than a year after a global study found that there was no safe amount of alcohol to consume.

"The widely held view of the health benefits of alcohol needs revising," said the Global Burden of Disease Study report published in the journal,

The Lancet. "Our results show that the safest level of drinking is none."

Still, Professor Eric Claassen of Amsterdam University explained at an event held by probiotic drink maker Yakult that strong Belgian beers are "very healthy" for gut health. The probiotics in twice-fermented beers like Hoegaarden and Westalle Tripel are what makes them better than others. Yet Claassen cautioned, "We don't want to give people a licence to drink more [beer](#)."

"In high concentrations [alcohol](#) is bad for the gut but if you drink just one of these beers every day it would be very good for you," he added.

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